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| <b>CM/ECF</b><br><br><b>External User's Guide</b><br><br>U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Florida | Chapter I<br><br>Getting Started |
|  | Section 10<br><br>Style Guide    |

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## Introduction

This guide contains the preferred style practices for all users of the CM/ECF application in the Southern District of Florida. The intention of the guide is to make everyone's task easier, whether they are entering data or inquiring into the CM/ECF data base, or uploading a proposed order. The application of a common set of styles when creating docket entries results in information being captured and displayed in more uniform and predictable ways, thus reducing confusion and errors. In addition, style consistency is the key to efficient searches in CM/ECF, since successful queries require very exact matches on search data including punctuation and abbreviations.

## Adding Parties

Much of case opening in CM/ECF consists of adding the names of debtors, joint debtors, plaintiffs, and defendants to cases. As cases progress, creditors and other parties are added as well. Access to accurate information is vital to the court, the bar and the general public. *When adding new parties to the CM/ECF database, the names should conform with standard punctuation and spacing conventions listed in the Style Conventions for Names section of this Guide.*

## Searching For Parties

Before adding any party to a case, search for that party using appropriate "search criteria". If the system displays the correct name and address, select that party to help eliminate multiple versions of the same party name/address.

Even something as simple as "United States" can cause ambiguity if everyone is entering it differently. For instance, following this style guide can help avoid "United States" being in the database also as "UNITED STATES", "U.S.", "US", "USA", "U.S.A.", or "U.S. of A."

## Search Strategies

CM/ECF searches are not key word searches but require exact text matches.

- ◆ When searching for debtor(s), the more search clues you provide, the more likely you are to find the exact person you are searching for. For example, if you search for a last name of Grant, CM/ECF may return a list of a hundred parties with that last name. However, if you search for a last name of Grant with a Social Security number of 333-22-1111, CM/ECF may return a single party.

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- ◆ When searching for creditors, it may be necessary to conduct multiple searches. First, search for the entire creditor name (e.g., World Communications). If that is not successful, you can search for part of the creditor's name (e.g., World Comm or just World). If there are articles in the title such as "A" or "The," you may or may not need to include the article in the search. For example, if a search request for The Timely Times does not produce a result try Timely Times.
- ◆ When searching for a Party **DO NOT** use an asterisk or star in the search criteria as follows:

Villa\*

Use of the asterisk slows down the entire system. When searching for Villareal, the name will be found without using the asterisk as follows:

Villa

### Adding Debtors

- ◆ Add debtors to cases using names and addresses exactly as they appear on the petition or complaint. In most instance, you will NOT find debtor(s) when searched in the CM/ECF database. You will have to add them to the database and the case as a new party. Also, if any portion of the debtor(s) name, address or social security number does not match, add party as new.
- ◆ If a debtor has a title, add the title in the "party text" box. Any title that you add as party text will show up on the face of the docket report following the name and separated by a comma.

#### Title Tips

1. The name of the debtor without the title will appear in docket text.
2. Titles will not appear on notices.
3. Titles will appear on the face of the docket report in upper and lower case following the debtor name as shown below:

Jose Garza, Administrator of the Estate of Sylvia Garza

Alamo Limestone, a Florida Corporation

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## Adding Plaintiffs and Defendants

- ◆ Add plaintiffs and defendants to cases using names exactly as they appear on the complaint. Or when you search for plaintiffs and defendants, you will probably find them in the database and can use the information in the database.
- ◆ Do NOT add any addresses for defendants unless a searched result displays an exact name, address, and/or social security number.
- ◆ Do NOT add a title for plaintiffs or defendants.
- ◆ Do NOT add a aliases for plaintiffs or defendants.
- ◆ Make sure to select the plaintiff or defendant party role.

## Adding Creditors

- ◆ Add creditors to cases using names already in the CM/ECF database if at all possible. When you search for a creditor, you will probably find the party in the CM/ECF data base. Creditors (such as Ford Motor Credit) are added to many different cases. Ideally, there should be only one Ford Motor Credit party in the CM/ECF database. This greatly simplifies searching when adding parties and querying cases.

For instance, it is better to add Ford Motor Credit to all cases even if that is not the exact name used on a document being docketed. The idea is to avoid adding name variations for a single creditor. For example:

☺ Ford Motor Credit

☹ Ford Motor Credit Company

☹ Ford Motor Credit Co.

☹ Ford Motor Credit Corporation

☹ Ford Motor Credit Company, Inc.

☹ Ford Motor Company

☹ Ford Motor Credit Corp.

☹ Ford Motors Credit Company

☹ Ford Motor Credit Company  
("FMCC")

The proliferation of different names for the same creditor makes searching frustrating and time consuming.

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- ◆ Do NOT add a title for creditors or any account numbers.
- ◆ Do NOT add aliases for creditors.
- ◆ Make sure to select the creditor party role.

### Style Conventions for Names

These style conventions apply to all names entered in the CM/ECF application.

- ◆ Use upper and lower case characters for all names and capitalize the first letter in a proper noun.  
  
Wallace D. Smith  
United Services Fidelity and Guaranty
- ◆ Use punctuation and single spacing between all names and following initials and periods.  
  
Smith, Inc.  
C. W. Bradford, Ltd.
- ◆ When typing names that have upper and lower case letters or hyphens, do not insert spaces. Also, do not insert a space before the first character of any line.  
Patricia DeLaGarza                      Kathleen O'Brien  
Patrick MacDougal                      Mary Smith-Baker
- ◆ If an individual does not have a middle name, leave that field blank. Do not enter "NMI" (no middle initial).
- ◆ If a party has multiple names such as Robert Kramer Johns Martin, add the extra names in the Middle Name box.  
  
Last name:              Martin  
Middle name:          Kramer Johns  
First name:             Robert
- ◆ Business names should be entered entirely in the Last Name box. Do not use the First Name or Middle Name box when entering business names.

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- ◆ Do not use the ampersand sign for “and” unless it is part of a company name on the petition or pleading.

B. & D. Company  
Cameron & Associates  
J & J Trucking

- ◆ Avoid abbreviations unless it is part of a company name on the petition or pleading.

|                             |                                  |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☹ First Federal Association | ☹ 1 <sup>st</sup> Federal Assoc. |
| ☹ Ford Motor Company        | ☹ Ford Motor Co.                 |

- ◆ Enter U.S. and U.S.A. without any periods.

|                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| US Dept of Agriculture | US Dept of Justice   |
| US Attorney            | US Dept of Education |

## Style Conventions for Addresses

These style conventions apply to all debtor addresses and creditor matrix addresses entered in the CM/ECF application.

- ◆ Addresses must not exceed four (4) lines. The party name and address must not exceed five (5) lines.

- ◆ Abbreviate post office addresses without periods between the P and O.

PO Box 1359  
POB 1359  
PO Drawer 34321

- ◆ Use digits for numbers in addresses.

3224 E 26 St  
425 6 St  
1 Valley Plaza

- ◆ When there is a street address as well as a post office box address for a debtor, add only the post office address.

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John J. Johnson  
PO Box 1477  
4218 Elmwood Ln **(Eliminate this line)**  
Miami FL 33130

◆ CORRECT

Ford Motor Company  
c/o Terri Brooks  
555 State Ave #2600  
Miami FL 33130

INCORRECT

Ford Motor Company  
Attention: Terri Brooks  
John Hancock Building, Suite 2600  
555 State Ave  
Miami, FL 33130

- ◆ Use the full nine-digit zip code if at all possible.

- ◆ Foreign addresses must have the full name of the post office and country of destination printed in capital letters.

- ◆ The country name or APO/FPO (Air Post Office/Fleet Post Office) destination must be the only information on the bottom line of the address.

Alfonso Diaz  
Rio de Danubec y Rio Florido  
CD. JUAREZ, CHIHUAHUA  
MEXICO #1050

Sgt. John Smith  
C Company 237 Armor  
Unit #21103, Box 512  
APO, AE 09014

- ◆ If the address contains an apartment number or suite number, you may use the # sign in place of the *word number* or *suite*.

Barbara Bixby  
322 W Shadow Ln # 334  
West Palm Beach FL 33401

- ◆ Use c/o to indicate "In Care Of".

Manuel Ortega, Jr.  
c/o Manuel Ortega, Sr.  
6612 E 6<sup>th</sup> St  
Ft. Lauderdale FL 33301

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- ◆ The preferred format for telephone numbers is 305-555-1212, rather than (305) 555-1212.

### Creditor Matrix Specification

- ◆ The matrix **must** be saved: in MS DOS/ASCII text format as **creditor.scn** (no other filename or extension is acceptable). E-filers must upload the creditor matrix through ECF (Electronic Case Filing). All other debtors must supply a service matrix on a 3½ inch High Density diskette. Debtors not represented by an attorney who do not have access to a computer may submit a matrix on 8 ½ x 11" unlined, white paper.
- ◆ Lists **MUST** be typed in one of the following standard typefaces or print styles: Courier 10 Pitch, Prestige Elite or Letter Gothic.
- ◆ Lists must be typed in a single column on the page.
- ◆ No letters or numbers can be closer than 1 inch from any margin.
- ◆ Each name and address must consist of no more than 5 (five) total lines, with at least one blank lines between creditors.
- ◆ The creditor name must be on the first line. List the creditors first name first, last name last, without titles. (e.g., Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.)
- ◆ Put attention or c/o references on the second line following the party's name if needed.
- ◆ Each line must **not** exceed 40 characters in length.
- ◆ Zip codes must be on the last line along with the city and state. Use a hyphen for nine digit zip codes. Use the standard abbreviations for states (see below) which consists of two capital-letters with no periods.
- ◆ Do **not** include the following parties on your matrix: Debtor, joint debtor, attorney for the debtor, U.S. trustee or case trustee. They will be added by clerk's office staff and retrieved from the system for noticing.
- ◆ Do **not** include duplicate creditor information (e.g., same name and address).



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## Abbreviations -States and Territories

|    |                      |    |                 |
|----|----------------------|----|-----------------|
| AL | Alabama              | MT | Montana         |
| AK | Alaska               | NE | Nebraska        |
| AZ | Arizona              | NV | Nevada          |
| AR | Arkansas             | NH | New Hampshire   |
| AS | American Samoa       | NJ | New Jersey      |
| CA | California           | NM | New Mexico      |
| CO | Colorado             | NY | New York        |
| CT | Connecticut          | NC | North Carolina  |
| DE | Delaware             | ND | North Dakota    |
| DC | District of Columbia | CM | N. Mariana Isl. |
| FL | Florida              | OH | Ohio            |
| GA | Georgia              | OK | Oklahoma        |
| GU | Guam                 | OR | Oregon          |
| HI | Hawaii               | TT | Palau           |
| ID | Idaho                | PA | Pennsylvania    |
| IL | Illinois             | PR | Puerto Rico     |
| IN | Indiana              | RI | Rhode Island    |
| IA | Iowa                 | SC | South Carolina  |
| KS | Kansas               | SD | South Dakota    |
| KY | Kentucky             | TN | Tennessee       |
| LA | Louisiana            | TX | Texas           |
| ME | Maine                | UT | Utah            |
| TT | Marshall Island      | VT | Vermont         |
| MD | Maryland             | VA | Virginia        |
| MA | Massachusetts        | VI | Virgin Islands  |
| MX | Mexico               | WA | Washington      |
| MI | Michigan             | WV | West Virginia   |
| TT | Micronesia           | WI | Wisconsin       |
| MS | Mississippi          | WY | Wyoming         |
| MO | Missouri             |    |                 |

## Geographic Directions

|           |                |
|-----------|----------------|
| North = N | Northeast = NE |
| South = S | Southwest = SW |
| East = E  | Southeast = SE |
| West = W  | Northwest = NW |

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## Street Designators

It's recommended to use the following abbreviated street designators.

|           |      |
|-----------|------|
| Avenue    | Ave  |
| Boulevard | Blvd |
| Highway   | Hwy  |
| Lane      | Ln   |
| Street    | St   |
| Road      | Rd   |
| Circle    | Cir  |
| Court     | Ct   |
| Way       | Wy   |
| Parkway   | Pkwy |
| Place     | Pl   |
| Terrace   | Terr |

## E-Orders

Pre-Submission Format Requirements [also see Court Guidelines for Preparing Orders]:

- ! Orders can **ONLY** be uploaded in PDF format and must contain a .pdf extension. If you use Adobe Acrobat Writer version 3 or 4 to convert orders to pdf, your orders should be prepared using the Courier, Helvetica, or Times New Roman font (regular, bold, italic, and bold italic). If you use Adobe Acrobat Writer version 5, your orders should be prepared using the Arial, Courier, or Times New Roman font (regular, bold, italic, and bold italic). Other fonts will not process through the bankruptcy noticing center.
- ! The top margin on the FIRST PAGE must be four (4) inches. All other pages of the order will have a top margin of one inch.
- ! To assist the court in verifying that the "entire" body of the submitted order has been properly transmitted, the LAST LINE in the order must be three (3) pound symbols (###), centered in the middle of the page, to indicate the order is complete.
- ! A line for the date and a signature line for the judge is omitted. All orders remitted electronically through E-Orders, will be signed electronically by the judge in the space provided by the top margin on the first page.

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- ! All orders shall indicate the name of the law firm, name of the attorney responsible for the order, mailing address and phone number for the firm and, if desired, the fax number and/or e-mail address. This information shall be included on the order, after the line containing the three (3) pound symbols.
  
- ! If the submitting party indicates to whom copies of the signed order will be sent, those parties names and addresses shall be included on the order, after the line containing the three (3) pound symbols. The party submitting the order is required to serve all interested parties, including those listed on the order, and shall file a certificate of service with the court indicating the manner of service.